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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 763  
By DeBerry J

A RESOLUTION to create a special joint committee to study the economic and social effects of Tennessee's affirmative action initiatives.

WHEREAS, in order to bring fairness and equity to the arenas of public employment, public education and public contracting, this General Assembly has enacted various statutory programs, including, minority teaching scholarships, set-asides, bidding preferences, and loan guarantees, to encourage increased participation by minorities and other disadvantaged groups in business and higher education; and

WHEREAS, the passage of Proposition 209 in California began a widespread, spirited debate concerning the benefits and/or injury to society afforded by the operation of state and federal government affirmative action programs; and

WHEREAS, opponents of affirmative action advance a desire to defend civil rights through equal treatment under the law, regardless of race, sex, color, ethnicity or national origin, while adherents of affirmative action point to the dearth of minority representation in higher education, government and private business; and

WHEREAS, committed and honest proponents of both of these viewpoints continue to disagree as to whether any sort of balance can be achieved between the egalitarian beliefs contained in Proposition 209 and other similar initiatives on the one hand and continuation of

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government programs to affirmatively provide opportunities to advance and secure the civil rights of minorities and other disadvantaged groups on the other hand; and

WHEREAS, a role of the General Assembly is to carefully examine the economic and social effects of public policies such as affirmative action, and then act to effect any changes necessary to ensure fairness and equity for all citizens; and

WHEREAS, when studying these important public policy issues, it is imperative that we should operate, not from opinion or conjecture, but from fact, as the truth will serve all views of the issue equally well; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That there is hereby created a special joint committee to study the positive and negative aspects of the economic and social effects of Tennessee's affirmative action initiatives.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the committee shall consist of three (3) members of the House of Representatives and three (3) members of the Senate, to be appointed by the respective speakers.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That all appropriate state agencies shall provide assistance to the special joint committee upon request of the chair.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That all legislative members of the special joint committee who are duly elected members of the General Assembly shall remain members of such committee until the committee reports its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the special joint committee shall be convened by the member with the most years of continuous service in the General Assembly; and at its first meeting shall elect a chair, vice-chair, and such other officers the committee deems necessary.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the special joint committee shall report its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation or interim reports, to the General Assembly no later than February 1, 1999 at which time the committee shall cease to exist.